

Argument Against Measure I

Belmont officials claim there is a “crisis” and “emergency” requiring a sales tax increase. Yet, the City’s financial condition is the best it’s been in many years. Expected new revenues are more than adequate to bring the City’s infrastructure (mainly streets and storm drains) up to par.

Furthermore, this is a **general** tax—not earmarked for infrastructure. The City could use it for any purpose. In fact, the City cannot legally say now how the funds will be used. We are giving the City a “**blank check**,” which can be spent on employee salaries, pensions, and literally whatever City Hall wants over the next 30 years.

Belmont’s financial reserves have increased by more than \$6 million over the past six years to \$9.7 million, which could be spent on streets and storm drains.

This improving revenue trend will only accelerate in future years, with new development projects contributing \$2-\$3 million more each year! This includes an estimated \$1.5 million per year in hotel taxes alone from the new Marriott and Hilton hotels.

Belmont could raise another \$700,000 each year just by increasing its hotel tax rate to 12%—matching most surrounding cities—with no added burden on our residents or businesses.

Estimated yearly revenue increases from new projects include approximately \$260,000 in property taxes, \$231,000 from Crystal Springs Uplands School (CSUS), and \$300,000 in rent from a new Clear Channel digital billboard!

These new revenues are **much higher** than the \$1.3 million the City expects to raise from this proposed tax. **Increasing our sales tax rate to 9.5%** would make Belmont’s rate higher than all cities in San Mateo County but one! This high sales tax will hurt our local retail businesses.

This sales tax increase is **not** needed and should be **rejected**. **Vote NO on Measure I!**

/s/ Timothy E. Strinden, Retired Federal Auditor
/s/ Dave Warden, Vice President, Mid-Peninsula Water District
/s/ Tran Tran, Financial Controller
/s/ Bill Larsen, Retired Criminal Prosecutor
/s/ Gordon M. Seely, Ph.D., Professor of History Emeritus